

# PROVO: Painting a Picture Yesterday

(Continued From Page 1)

After a day of exploration, the settlers began to build Fort Utah April 3 — and this date eventually was adopted by city fathers as Provo's birthday.

For many years, March 12 was commemorated as the date the first colonizers arrived. But in 1968 this writer, then editor of The Daily Herald, researched historical data and found April 1 as the most acceptable date.

March 12 simply did not check out. Church records showed that at a March 13 council meeting in President Young's office in Salt Lake City, John S. Higbee was chosen bishop of the Fort Utah Branch to head the colony. And on March 17 the names of 33 men "who were going to settle in Utah Valley" were read.

Before they could embark on the mission, the pioneers still had to outfit their wagons and assemble livestock, farm implements, seeds and provisions.

A definite statement on the arrival date came in the journal of

George Washington Bean of the original party, later to become a county commissioner and church official. Bean said the settlers reached the river on his 18th birthday, which happened to be April 1.

Mayor Verl G. Dixon and Commissioners Ray Murdock and Leo Allen responded to the Herald study by appointing a research team consisting of Dr. Gustive O. Larson, chairman, Dr. and Mrs. LeRoy Hafen and Theron H. Luke. The group verified the findings. Accordingly, on March 21, 1969 the city commission adopted an ordinance designating April 3 — when church records said construction of the fort began — as Provo's official birthday.

What did Fort Utah look like? The accompanying sketch by an artist with Captain Howard Stansbury's government survey party undoubtedly is a reasonably-authentic portrayal of the fort at the time the drawing was made.

In an early publication by Lipincott, Grambo and Co. of Philadelphia the illustration was iden-

tified as "Fort Utah, or Provaux City — Utah Valley."

Another interpretation is portrayed in a painting by early Provo artist Samuel Jepperson from descriptions of pioneer settlers. The painting is displayed in the Museum at North Park. Apparently representing the finished fort, the Jepperson sketch shows the stockade as well as the log cabins.

Both the Stansbury and Jepperson versions picture the elevated bastion with a cannon mounted on top. The militia occasionally fired the cannon for practice. Indeed, Lt. William Dayton was killed and George W. Bean (mentioned above) was critically injured in a misfiring accident. But historians make no mention of the cannon's being used in action against the Indians.

The fort was south of the river, believed near the present Geneva Road. A monument erected by the Daughters of Pioneers in 1937 marks the general location.

In 1968, the Utah Lake Lions

Club in cooperation with Brigham Young University archaeologists and Provo City sought to prove out the exact location, but were unable to find remnants considered to be conclusive evidence.

Because of cold and wetness at the original location, a new fort was built in the spring of 1850 on higher ground at the site of the present North (Sowiette) Park and Fifth North and Fifth West.

By 1851 and 1852, settlers were building on lots outside the forts. There still were Indian troubles of course, and in 1854 during the "Walker War" (named for a hostile Ute chief) Provo's pioneers proceeded to build a 12-foot mud-and-rock wall around part of the city. The project was suspended when Indian attacks eased off and the scene became more peaceful.

## Provo Birthday Party Wednesday

Provo's Annual Provo City birthday dinner and program, sponsored by the Sons and Daughters of the Utah Pioneers of Provo and the Senior Citizens, will be Wednesday, noon, at the Eldred Center, 230 West 500 North.

The program consists of a presentation by Jaynann M. Payne and a musical program featuring

the Madsen Memorial Chorus.

Payne is a Provoan active in civic and church pursuits. She was Mrs. Utah in 1967 and runner-up to Mrs. America in 1968. She travels nationally for the Freeman Institute and is currently the National Director of the Center for Family Studies in that organization. She has lectured at BYU Education Week for

14 years.

She is married to Dean W. Payne and is the mother of 12 children, and is a graduate of BYU.

Payne will discuss pioneer women.

The program is under direction of Pearl Stevenson Bowen of the Eldred Center and Rulon Morgan of the SUP.



## Arthur Allen Jr.

SALT LAKE CITY (UPI) — Arthur A. Allen Jr., a prominent attorney who represented city, county and state governments for many years, died Sunday after a lingering illness. He was 68.

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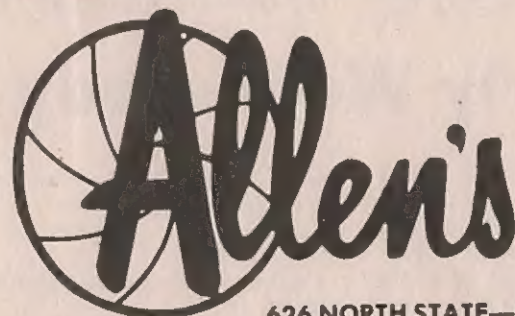
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